

INL attends Utah Energy Summit

Idaho National Laboratory leaders and technical experts participated in the first annual Utah Energy Summit in Salt Lake City April 15-17. It was hosted by Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman and included the first National Governors Association Natural Resources Committee field hearing on energy.

The field hearing is one of the first actions taken after the National Governors Association launched its 2007 Energy Project. The hearing focused on energy priorities and actions aimed at meeting America's clean energy goals. Among the topics were the availability and challenges of developing a suite of energy resources in North America, alternative fuels standards, transportation fuel efficiency, renewable energy policies and technologies, carbon and water management, conservation, and increased funding for advanced technologies. Presenters were selected to represent the political, commercial and environmental spectrum of interests.

On Monday, governors from six states participated in a panel discussion called "Strengthening Domestic Energy Security." Gov. Huntsman led the discussion that also included Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer, Nevada Gov. Jim Gibbons, Wyoming Gov. Dave Freudenthal, Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland and West Virginia Gov. Joe Manchin, plus several CEOs whose companies make major energy contributions in the U.S. and Canada.

INL's director of Science and Technology J.W. "Bill" Rogers, Jr., spoke to the opening plenary session of the NGA field hearing to acquaint attendees with INL, its missions and breadth of energy research. He emphasized the energy-rich status of the Rocky Mountain Region and the need for diversifying clean energy options through research, development and demonstration. He described INL's decade-long streak of winning R&D 100 awards, and highlighted INL's geothermal, wind and fossil energy programs. He noted that "While we are a multiprogram national laboratory, INL has been working for some time on clean, smart and secure energy solutions in several public-private partnerships."

Gov. Huntsman said, "Many governors have taken strong steps to create energy initiatives in their states that promote clean, secure and affordable energy for our future. This NGA field hearing is a unique and important opportunity for energy policy experts across the country to participate in shaping the national landscape for energy policy."

He noted that the governors will send recommendations and key energy issues to the U.S. Congress to ensure that legislators know that energy security is seen as a major priority by state government leaders and reflect the grassroots concerns of their citizens.

INL fossil energy expert Bruce Reynolds participated in a panel on unconventional energy sources and spoke about developing the oil sands in the Rocky Mountain Region. He detailed some of the environmental, technical and economic challenges in harvesting energy from the oil sands and concluded by saying, "Oil sands are likely to lag oil shale production by several years, since they have some significant issues to overcome."

Also attending for INL were Steven Aumeier, director of the laboratory's Energy Security Initiative; Bob Neilson, manager of Renewable Energy and Power efforts; Mike Hagood, relationship manager in Energy and Technology Systems; David Anderson, account executive for energy in Technology Transfer; and Mike Sponseller, deputy director of Communications & Public Affairs.

INL presented a newly created exhibit that focused on clean, smart and secure energy options offered by the laboratory in renewable, fossil and other energy research. It included technology development in fossil, renewable, advanced energy storage and carbon-water management research.

After the Utah Energy Summit, Rogers led a group of INL researchers in a second round of meetings during the past month at the University of Utah with key energy and engineering researchers.

Photo: Gov. Huntsman at podium

Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman hosted the first Utah Energy Summit April 15-17 in Salt Lake City that included participation by six governors, more than 300 people and about a dozen professionals from Idaho National Laboratory.

Photo: Windpower

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Topics included renewable energy sources such as windpower.